

White House at once on the security line and find out whether or not Dulles had briefed Kennedy on the fact that for months the CIA had not only been supporting and assisting but actually training Cuban exiles for the eventual purpose of supporting an invasion of Cuba itself.

"Seaton reported back to me in half an hour. His answer:

Kennedy had been briefed on this operation."

Kennedy, Nixon continued, was advocating "what was already the policy of the American government—covertly—and Kennedy had been so informed . . . Kennedy was endangering the security of the whole operation. . . .

"There was only one thing I could do. The covert operation had to be protected at all costs. I must not even suggest by implication that the United States was rendering aid to rebel forces in and out of Cuba. In fact, I must go to the other extreme: I must attack the Kennedy proposal to provide such aid as wrong and irresponsible because it would violate our treaty commitments."⁵

The next night, during their fourth debate from the ABC-TV studio in Manhattan, Nixon hopped on the Kennedy proposal as "dangerously irresponsible." He said it would violate "five treaties" between the United States and Latin America as well as the Charter of the United Nations.

The Nixon camp was elated. All the next day, as the Republican candidate barnstormed through eastern Pennsylvania, members of the Nixon staff let it be known that they felt Kennedy had finally made a serious error.

That night, October 22, in the crowded gymnasium at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Nixon attacked:

"He [Kennedy] called for—and get this—the U. S. Government to support a revolution in Cuba, and I say that this is the most shockingly reckless proposal ever made in our history by a presidential candidate during a campaign—and I'll tell you why . . . he comes up, as I pointed up, with the fantastic recommendation that the U. S. Government shall directly aid the anti-Castro forces both in and out of Cuba. . . .

"You know what this would mean? We would violate right off the bat five treaties with the American States,

including the Treaty of Bogota of 1948. We would also violate our solemn commitments to the United Nations. . . ."⁶

By the time he reached Wisconsin the next day, he was feeling the heat of the Nixon attack.

In North Carolina, Adlai Stevenson, campaigning for Kennedy, was alarmed at Kennedy's stand on Cuba. Stevenson had spoken at Duke University on October 21, and now he was at his sister's plantation in Southern Pines, North Carolina. He placed a long-distance call to Kennedy in Wisconsin. When he got through, Stevenson warned that the statement urging aid to the exiles could develop into a political trap for Kennedy if he were elected. He expressed strong opposition, and urged the Democratic standard-bearer to back off slightly from his New York statement.

In their conversation, Kennedy seemed embarrassed about the statement and implied it had been issued without adequate clearance. He told Stevenson he would pull back from it, and regain a safer position. Accordingly, Kennedy dispatched a telegram to Nixon that day in which he said he had "never advocated and I do not now advocate intervention in Cuba in violation of our treaty obligations." And he said no more about aiding Cuban exiles.

Three days later, the October 31 issue of *Life* appeared with St. George's and Walker's pictures of Cuban exiles in training.

The campaign was now rushing to a climax. On November 2 Kennedy had his last CIA briefing, this time from General Cabell, rather than from Dulles. Kennedy had requested this briefing in order to be brought up to date on any last-minute international developments.

The CIA deputy director flew to Los Angeles and talked with the candidate aboard the *Caroline*, Kennedy's Convar, during a flight from Los Angeles to San Diego. The two men were alone in the rear compartment of the plane. Cabell left Kennedy at San Diego.

In March of 1962, when Nixon charged in his book